The Cleveland Museum of Art

Press Release

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CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART HOSTS FREE LECTURES ON ROWING

(Cleveland, OH) The sport of rowing has given rise to a rich legacy of art, literature, and tradition. Two free lectures at the Cleveland Museum of Art will provide an introduction to rowing as a sport and as a subject for artists. The first speaker is Thomas E. Weil, Jr., a Houston attorney who was a competitive rower and has collected over 1,000 images of the sport. His slide lecture, on Sunday afternoon, March 2, at 2:30 pm, is called "Blues, Blades and Blisters: Popular Images of Rowing, The First Modern Sport, Prior to Thomas Eakins." In it, he describes rowing's evolution over two centuries as one of the first organized and regulated athletic team activities of our time. On Sunday, March 16, at 2:30 pm, Martin A. Berger, visiting assistant professor of art history, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, delivers the second lecture: "Painting Victorian Manhood: Thomas Eakins's Rowing Pictures." [NOTE: This was previously released as taking place on March 19.] These events complement the exhibition **Thomas Eakins: The Rowing Pictures**, which comes to its third and final venue at the Cleveland Museum, February 19 through May 15, having completed critically acclaimed runs at the National Gallery of Art and the Yale University Art Gallery.

Weil's talk will track the development of rowing (also known as aquatics, boating, boat-racing, crew and sculling) as a sport in Britain and the United States. His slides will be a representative sampling of printed images of rowing from the 1740s to Thomas Eakins's time, drawn from his own collection. Many were created as works of fine or decorative art, many as illustrations for books or news magazines, and many as regatta posters or advertisements drawing on rowing images. He plans to touch on the development of club, school and other rowing programs; the evolution of equipment and technique; the sociology of participation, including exclusivity and discrimination; and the influence of spectators and artists.

Anticipating his talk at the museum, Weil said: "A caveat—I'm not a credentialled professor, a professional bookman or printseller, or a librarian or curator. I'm an amateur in love with the history, art, literature, and stuff of a sport famed for its amateurism, and I hope to share some of the joys of discovery, of connoisseurship, and of collecting things of rarity, of beauty and of profound commonnness, all of which have enriched my life for over thirty years."

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Weil obtained his B.A. from Yale University in 1970 and his J.D. from the University of Virginia Law School in 1978. He is a partner in the Houston office of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, concentrating in project finance and energy matters. As a rower, he has competed for Phillips Academy, Andover; Yale University; and the New Haven Rowing Club. He has been a life member of the United States Rowing Association since 1970. He is also a member of the Leander Club, Henley-on-Thames, England. He is currently compiling an annotated bibliography of rowing literature. He frequently lends images from his collection to exhibitions and publications, including the catalogue for **Thomas Eakins: The Rowing Pictures**, an exhibition for which he served as consultant.

Berger's talk will give an overview of Eakins' training and interests as well as reflections on why Eakins turned to the subject of rowing. Berger obtained his B.A. from Wesleyan University in art history and English and his M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. from Yale University in American studies. A contributor to the exhibition's catalogue, Berger is also author of the forthcoming book *Determining Manhood: Thomas Eakins and the Construction of Victorian Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press).

A landmark in the history of American realism, Eakins's rowers are among the most celebrated and recognized images in American art. The exhibition brings all of his rowing pictures together for the first time. They include nine oil paintings, and fourteen drawings and watercolors, all created between 1871 and 1874. The exhibition places in context one of the key American paintings in the CMA collection—Eakins's *The Biglin Brothers Turning the Stake*. **The Rowing Pictures** will be on view in the CMA's 19th-century galleries (234 and 234a) where the museum's paintings by Gauguin, van Gogh, and Monet's *Water Lilies* are normally displayed. (This gallery will be reinstalled after the Eakins exhibition as part of the museum's overall permanent collection reinstallation plan.)

Dyane Hanslik of the museum's education staff will give gallery talks in the exhibition on February 19 and 23 at 1:30 and on February 20 at 2:30 pm. Museum instructor Jesse Rhinehart will teach an adult studio class entitled "Thomas Eakins: Design and Perspective" on Thursdays, February 20 through March 27, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm; the fee for this studio class is $60 plus materials.

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Thomas Eakins: The Rowing Pictures is organized by Yale University Art Gallery. The exhibition and catalogue have been made possible by grants from the Henry Luce Foundation, Inc., with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, the Virginia and Leonard Marx Publication Fund, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Holcombe T. Green, Jr., and Jan and Frederick Mayer. The Cleveland showing is made possible by Patron Sponsors Jane and Michael Horvitz and Donna and Jim Reid. Additional support has been provided by Yale Friends: Constance and Allen Ford, Diann and Thomas Mann, Anne and Henry Ott-Hansen, and Nancy and Bill West. Promotional support is provided by *Northern Ohio LIVE* and *89.7 WKSU*.

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